

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-02 /053 W
----- 019743

R 070905Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2257

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1374

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MARR, SN, NZ

SUBJECT: USN ACCESS TO NAVAL STORES BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT

1. IN COURSE OF MY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER LEE MARCH 29 ON
SUBJECT OF ASSISTANCE IN MOVING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES (SINGAPORE 1243
NOTAL), I MENTIONED OUR INTEREST IN CONTINUING ACCESS TO FORMER
ANZUK BERTHS AND FUEL DEPOT AND POSSIBILITY OF WORKING THROUGH NEW
ZEALANDERS AS MEANS MINIMIZING POLITICAL RISKS. WHILE LEE LISTENED,
HE BROKE OFF CONVERSATION WITH COMMENT HE WANTED CONCENTRATE OUR
DISCUSSION ON VIETNAM REFUGEE PROBLEM.

2. ON APRIL 2, LEE CHIONG GIAM, CURRENTLY ACTING AS DEPUTY SECRETARY
OF MFA, CALLED IN DCM TO DISCUSS ARTICLE BY BRUCE KOHN WHICH A-
PPEARED IN WELLINGTON EVENING POST ON MARCH 3. (SEE SINGAPORE 0907)
SINCE LEE HAD OBVIOUSLY NOT BEEN BRIEFED BY MINDEF ON MY EXPLANATION
OF ARTICLE TO DR. GOH (SINGAPORE 0982), DCM POINTED OUT THE
MISLEADING

AND DISTORTED FEATURES OF THE ARTICLE. DCM ALSO USED OPPORTUNITY
TO ELABORATE REASONS WHY U.S. THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IN POLITICAL
INTEREST OF ALL CONCERNED TO HAVE NEW ZEALAND MANAGE THE S MOKO
DEPOT AND TWO OF THE BERTHS AT THE STORES BASIN. LEE APPEARED QUITE
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INTERESTED AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MFA MAY ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE

MINDEF ON THIS MATTER.

3. DURING MY LUNCHEON ON APRIL 4 FOR VISITING CHAIRMAN JCS, GENERAL GEORGE BROWN, BOTH THE GENERAL AND I URGED DR. GOH TO CONSIDER THE ADVISABILITY OF HAVING NEW ZEALAND CONTROL PART OF THE STORES BASIN AND THE RELATED FUEL DEPOT IN THE EVENT THE GNZ DISPOSED TO ASSUME THIS RESPONSIBILITY. I NOTED THAT LEE KUAN YEW WAS CURRENTLY VISITING NEW ZEALAND AND ASKED IF THIS SUBJECT WERE LIKELY TO COME UP DURING OFFICIAL TALKS. GOH POINTED OUT THAT LEE WAS VISITING NEW ZEALAND PRIMARILY FOR VACATION AND THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THIS MATTER WOULD BE RAISED. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD BE DISCUSSED WHEN NEW ZEALAND MINISTER OF DEFENSE FRAZER VISITED SINGAPORE AT THE END OF APRIL. DR. GOH STRESSED THAT IN ANY EVENT THE U.S. NEED NOT WORRY SINCE U.S. SEVENTH FLEET SHIPS WOULD ALWAYS BE WELCOME TO USE THE NAVAL BASIN. GENERAL BROWN AND I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION, BUT NOTED THAT NEW ZEALAND CONTROL OF AT LEAST A PORTION OF THESE FACILITIES MIGHT SERVE TO INSULATE THE GOS FROM POLITICAL PRESSURES, E.G. - FROM THE RUSSIANS. DR. GOH IMMEDIATELY REPLIED THAT WE NEED HAVE NO WORRIES ON THIS SCORE, AND THAT SOVIET NAVY SHIPS WOULD BE KEPT TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE ISLAND. WHEN I MENTIONED THAT OUR NAVY WAS NERVOUS ABOUT HAVING SOVIET MERCHANT-MEN ANCHORED OR DOCKED NEAR OUR NAVY SHIPS IN THE BASIN, DR. GOH SEEMED TO THINK THAT ALL THIS COULD BE WORKED OUT IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD GIVE US NO PROBLEMS. WHEN GOH WAS ASKED WHETHER SEVENTH FLEET SHIPS WOULD ALWAYS BE ABLE TO OBTAIN POL AT THE STORES BASIN, ESPECIALLY IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER ARAB EMBARGO, DR. GOH PAUSED AND REPLIED QUOTE GOOD POINT UNQUOTE AND INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. ON HIS DEPARTURE, DR. GOH AGAIN ASSURED ME THAT WE NEED HAVE NO WORRIES ABOUT SEVENTH FLEET USE OF SINGAPORE'S FACILITIES.

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS FROM ABOVE THAT THIS SUBJECT WILL NOT ARISE DURING PM LEE'S VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND BUT THAT IT IS LIKELY TO COME UP WHEN DEFENSE MINISTER FRAZER VISITS LATER THIS MONTH. CRONK

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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